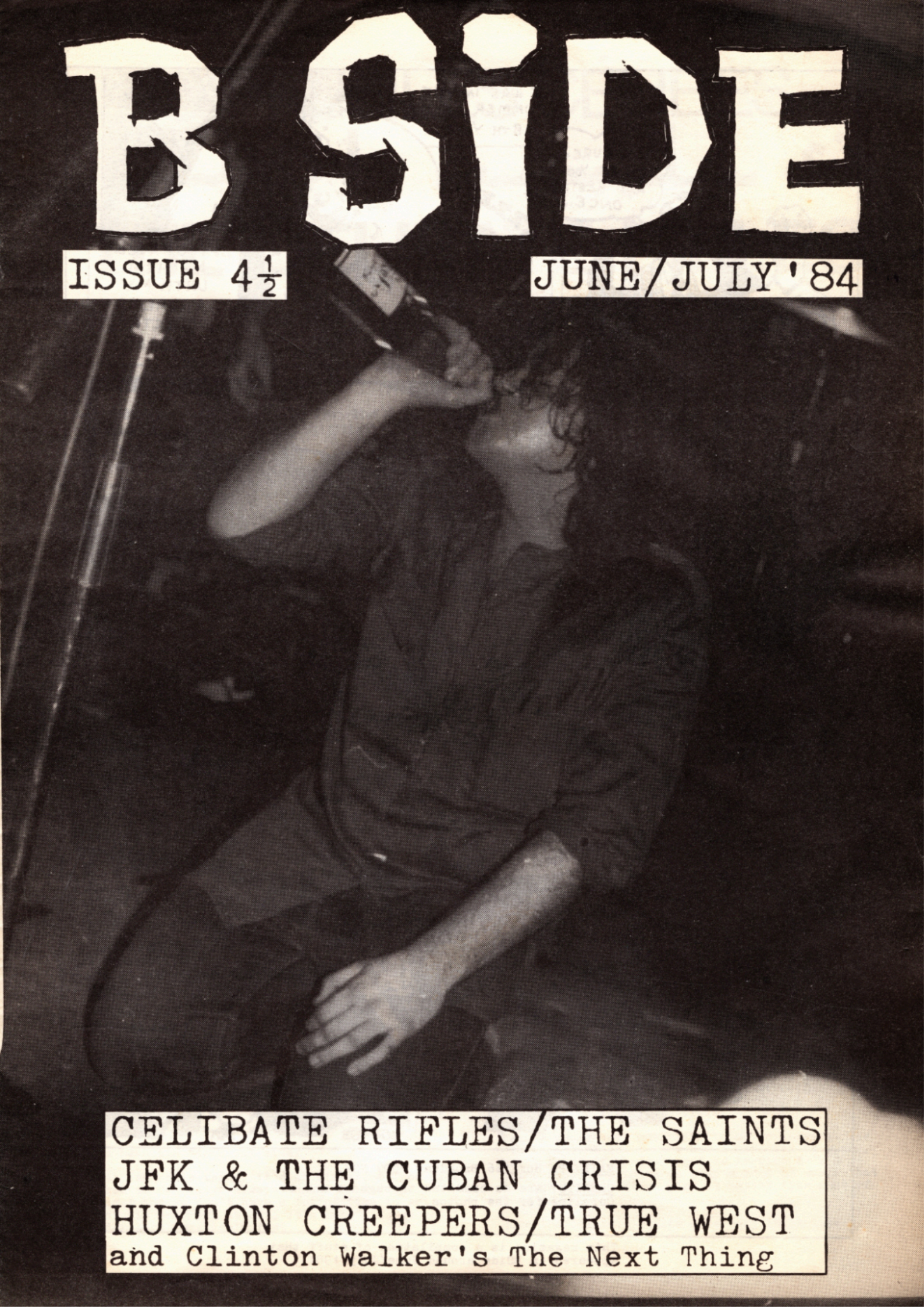
B SIDE

ISSUE 4½

JUNE/JULY '84



CELIBATE RIFLES/THE SAINTS
JFK & THE CUBAN CRISIS
HUXTON CREEPERS/TRUE WEST
and Clinton Walker's The Next Thing

IT WAS IN THE SUMMER OF MY 18TH YEAR...
WHY SURE... I WAS YOUNG AND RESTLESS ONCE...
BZZZZ
...I SHAVED MY HEAD WITH MY FATHER'S ELECTRIC RAZOR...
...I RUMMAGED THROUGH THE ATTIC FOR OLD CLOTHES...
...I SLAM DANCED TO LOUD, FAST MUSIC...
...I EVEN FORMED MY OWN BAND... "THE ANGRY YOUNG SOCIAL REBELS"...
C'MON EVERYONE... LETS HEAR IT...
FUCK CONFORMITY!
FUCK CONFORMITY
BUT THEN THE SUMMER ENDED... I WENT TO HARVARD AND BEGAN MY CAREER AS A BRILLIANT LAWYER, THANK GOD...
WOY/83

MAIL: Po Box 166 Broadway 2007 NSW.

CREDITS: Are as credited throughout and to Caroline for the photos.

This magazine is a compilation of stuff that appeared in BSide around June/July 1984.

LOS FUSILES CÉLIBES
ذی سلیبیت رایفلز
THE CELIBATE RIFLES
快樂槍音樂團

Damien Lovelock, singer for the Celibate Rifles was interviewed by Simon L.

There doesn't seem to be much press or interviews on the Celibate Rifles?

No well, I don't think there is, and there's probably a number of reasons for that. Number one from about November last year we've had a fairly low profile. We changed bassplayers and that sort of thing always disrupts the playing. And we weren't playing that much anyway cos we weren't that happy with what was happening live. A lot of hassles with promoters and shit like that, and so we cut back on the gigs. Another big factor is when we brought our first album out last year in April, Sedition was on and we sort of got a lot of push with that, and stole the show arguably. And I think Celibate Rifles were flavor of the month for about 3 or 4 months, and of course that doesn't last. So what we're finding now is one, we haven't had much press for awhile and two, the new album and new single hasn't been touched by the radio to my knowledge. 2SER may be playing it and Radio Sydney maybe playing it. I think that we're experiencing sort of a backlash, and also a lot of people don't really know what to make of the record so they're not saying anything. Very much like when I released the Ep, No Dance. The first three or four reviews didn't know what to say, so they just said there were three people on it. So I think it (lack of press coverage) is a combination of all these things.

Another thing is the Celibate Rifles don't seem to play many gigs. Not like say the Hoodoo Gurus who seem to play like 8 nights a week?

For one thing, our band has never been able to do that, three nights a week is a lot because of the kind of music we play, and the way we play it. And we do long sets, we don't do 40 minute sets, we'll often do ninety minutes. So you tend to need at least a day to get over that, and also it's been a policy of the band not really to do that, except in the very early days when we were trying to get enough money to do an Ep, we were having to do that with $60 supports so we played quite a bit then.

One thing that makes the Celibate Rifles stand out a bit from other independant bands is the fact that you've actually put out a lot of records?

We record stuff pretty soon after it's written, if we like the song we try and get into the studio and record it fresh. And I like making records, I enjoy it, apart from the ego thing and all that, it's an art form I'm not that familiar with...

You mean the technical side?

Just the whole thing, it's so different from live performance. We've always worked on a very low budget and we don't have a lot of time to get into a studio and feel it out. It's more like we get in and record relatively fast.

How long would you have taken to record the last album?

Ah... longer than Sideroxylon, probably 60 hours recording and mixing and remixing.

How did you initially get in contact with Hot Records?

They were a distributor of independant music, they sort of didn't have a criteria, they would distribute sort of anything, and they were approachable and accessible. So when we recorded 'But Jacques the Fish', the first Ep, we sold about 200 of those at gigs, and we really got pissed off with that because it's a hassle, and you don't want to do it, and no ones ever got change. So we approached a few places like Phantom who had their own labels and they didn't want to know us. So I went to Hot and said like "I've got 200 of these record left, would you distribute them", and they said "Oh sure", and they took them, and they went, they sold out in three days or something. It was the fastest selling Ep that year. and about a year later it was repressed because there was such a demand, and the record was beginning to sell for more money as a collectors piece, and that was never the intent of that record or any record.

Have you had any interest from big record co.s, major ones?

Yeah, we've had people from America come and look at us.

Which labels?

Elektra, A&M and CBS... not CBS, I can't remember the third one.

Do you think anything will come of that, or were they just sort of waffling on?

Well I'm sure if we wanted to go to a major we probably could. The way it is at the moment we're sticking with Hot, even though there are disadvantages obviously. Number one they have no muscle they can't get you onto the Triple M air list, and if you make a video it's not going to get shown properly.

Yeah but even if they did have that, Triple M wouldn't play Celibate Rifles because they're too loud or something?

No that's right, the music's wrong, lyrically the content is not right, and musically the sounds are wrong. They don't sit in that format well.

Any interest in going overseas?

Yeah I would very much like to go to America. The other guys, I don't know how interested they are, but I think if we don't get to America it's a crime because I think we play a sort of music that America likes, but we play it better than most of them do.

Have the Celibate Rifles done many interstate

The name No Dance, did that come out of that anti fashion thing, or was just stating the kind of music it was?

No Dance was purely because we didn't have a rythmn section, and then someone said to me 'Oh look it's gonna get interpreted like a New Romantic band'. Louis actually, Louis Tillett said that. But I thought it seems so hard to come up with another name, and No Dance seemed ok, especially because the three bands we came from were all reasonably rocky, electric bands that people like to go and get pissed and dance to. So I thought ok there seems to be like some thematic reason to call it No Dance.

Do you work through an agency, for business?

Well we're doing the national tour through Harbour basically because we can't afford to go up to Brisbane again and be blown out by promoters and stuff. We lost a lot of money on the last one, a couple of thousand bucks, that's huge to us, thats one side of an album. With Harbour those things don't happen. If you're getting into bed with a major at least know why your doing it and what your there for, then I suppose there's not as much chance you'll get lost. I don't think their big nasty evil men who pull the strings, I think a lot of people just walk in and hand them the strings, well we won't do that. We went there under the agreement that we can knock back gigs if we don't want to do them, and we won't do certain supports and we'll only play three nights a week and ra ra ra, and they were prepared to accept that.

But if say, you went to a big record company you would have to tone down the "roughness" of the sound?

They may want to do that, but at the same time I'd think they'd understand fairly quickly that we're not interested in that. Like one American guy, one the guys that came out to see us, said to me that we were one of the best live bands he'd ever seen, but at the same time we had virtually zero commercial potential because it was just too left field for America, their ears just wouldn't take it in.

Yeah but you've only got to get a quarter of a per cent of America to buy your record, and you're probably a millionaire or something?

That's right, that's what I keep telling myself. A guy explained to me that if we were cult there at the same level we are here, we would be making about a million a year in sales, something like that. We sold about five and a half thousand records last year all up, and that's reasonable considering we've hardly ever been anywhere and get no coverage.

You guys supported the Gun Club. How did that go? Was that a whole tour?

No just one gig in Sydney which was a bit of a debacle. The Gun Club showed up very late, and people didn't really want to see us anyway, they wanted to see the Gun Club, and for some reason we played one set and like battled on and the sound was pretty dreadful, but anyway we did the set cos we said we would. And the people sort of stood around and went 'boring boring and we came off, and the guy came up and said 'you've got to play another one because the Gun Club aren't here yet' So we went out and did a few songs, I mean we were pretty pissed at having to do it, and as a matter of fact we probably wouldn't do it again. But that night we were feeling like benefactors or something. So I rang the Gun Club and said your very late, and they just shitted on me for ringing them up. He was just pretty drunk and he was in the middle of a tour and didn't really give a fuck. We'd probably be the same in the same position but on the other end of it you don't tend to be very understanding. You just go 'fuck you mate we've just done two sets to a crowd that hate us, just for you so you can stick it right up your ass'.

Have you supported any other overseas bands?

The Dead Kennedys we played a few dates with them, I can't remember if there was anybody else actually.

Did that go a bit better?

The Kennedys went very well. We did them at the Tivoli and Cronulla Workers that one where there was the big riot.

Was there a big riot?

I don't know I left. I'm not a big fan of the Kennedys I liked them once but I didn't want to see them two nights in a row

I saw them at the Trade Union and thought it was ok, but there was just a lot of fights afterwards people being stupid?

Yeah it's a wierd scene, I think he seems to incite a lot of violence without realising it.

Do you think the bit of a 'scene' that exists around independant music...

A bit of? well there's a huge one, impenetrable barrier I think it's called.

Do you think that that has a detrimental effect the music itself?

I can't answer that, I don't know.

In that bands are trying to pander up to that fashion thing?

To a point then yeah. Sometimes it's nice to have a specific target audience, it helps some people. But I think it's never that good, you get too stuck in your own little world and you don't see anything else. You can tend to disappear onto a pretty wierd tangent. Independent music is almost a laughable term really it doesn't really mean anything anymore, it's not economically defined or artistically. It's just this really vague label. Your covering everything from Hugo Klang to AT Wells. It's just like saying 'pop music' the term means nothing.

What about the new album's cover, how did you come up with that?

Just an idea for a cover.

It doesn't mean anything?

I guess it means different things to different people in the band. It was interesting aesthetically to look at, and it's a nice sort of thing on linguistics.

No big heavy message though?

No no no... we don't have the money.

Do you see many local bands?

I don't go out to the gigs anymore that much.

How come?

I get tired of it. I get tired of the venues cos I play there anyway, and I'm not that big a fan o today's music. I listen to a lot of old stuff and I'm going backwards.

What sort of things?

I'm sort of enjoying John Coltrane at the moment, I listen to a lot of Ralph Towner, Keith Jarrett and then as well as that a lot of old sixties stuff. I'm doing a single with Pam a surf song. I listen to a lot of Only Ones, Lou Reed I like. Bands I like, the Wet Taxis, Died Pretty when they're not too drunk, the End I liked Mushroom Planet aren't bad sometimes. I guess I'm not a very good audience type person, people say to me 'here's a new record listen to this, and I don't like it because I haven't heard it before.

What they think because you're in a band and your a singer you'know' about records?

Yeah and you've got a really good ear. And in fact I've got a dreadful ear and it takes me ages to catch onto anything new. I'm hopeless but luckily there's other guys in the band that aren't like that.

tours?

No we've done one to Queensland and two to Melbourne.

How did they go?

Queensland was a bit of a disaster, a lot of promotional trouble. That's the other thing working independantly, you have a lot of hassle with independent promoters, because a lot of them are really untogether. The first one in Melbourne was enjoyable for the band. But the guy who took us down was the guy who brought the Dead Kennedy's out, and the first night we were up against the Kennedy's and the second night we were up against Midnight Oil, and the third night we played in the Seaview but everybody was broke because they'd been to see the Dead Kennedy's and Midnight Oil. The second time around we went to Melbourne and Adelaide as a support act for the Clowns, and that went very well.

You haven't done a video yet?

Yeah we shot a video for Sideroxylon, the track Tick Tock and that was played three times I think once on After Dark and twice on Channel O. And I did one for Marlboro, and they played 35 seconds of that on Channel O once and that's it.

What you haven't got anything for the new album?

We're just thinking about doing one now, for Wild Desire because it's the single, and we'd like Wild Desire to get some airplay on the straight station and if there's a clip they might think about it.

A lot of people slag off video, because of the concentration on it, they say it's responsible for a lot of the so-called shitty music that's around at the moment. Do you think that that is true?

I think there is a big element of soundtrack for video type music, and I think that is a very wrong priority.

People are putting out movies?

Yeah yeah you write the script and then you put the music to it afterwards. I think there's always been a place for a visual thing with music but to tell you the truth I can't watch a video music show, I can't sit through it. It just drives me up the wall. There's been a few things I've liked I saw some stuff by the David Johansen band, a German video which was live and that was great. I liked the Mel Brooks one too.

The Celibate Rifles are one of the few bands that have an openly Australian thing to the lyrics. There doesn't seem to be many other bands around that are doing that. Does that surprise you?

It's not surprising it's upsetting I guess. I'm not jingoistic or that patriotic or anything. I mean you live here so it seems easier. I mean I have a lot of difficulty I sing in a psuedo American accent sort of, and I think lyrically there are a lot of people who write that way because you've grown up hearing that and nothing else and it's very difficult. Yeah I'm surprised that people don't do it more. There's your Cold Chisels and Midnight Oils and stuff, but there's a hell of a lot of bands that don't. I think it's unconcious with a lot of people, they don't even realise...

Apathetic?

Yeah yeah it's just sort of "baby, baby, rolling down the road". It's easier to write about Fords and Chevies and Kingswoods.

I think people think the Celibate Rifles are like that. Like your 'wild men of rock' or something?

Yeah, they're wrong. We've always been seen as sort of yobbos.

Sort of suburban?

I guess we are suburban. But to me Darlinghurst is a suburb too just like any other suburb, it just takes itself a whole lot more seriously than anyone else is prepared to.

How come there wasn't any lyric sheet in the new album?

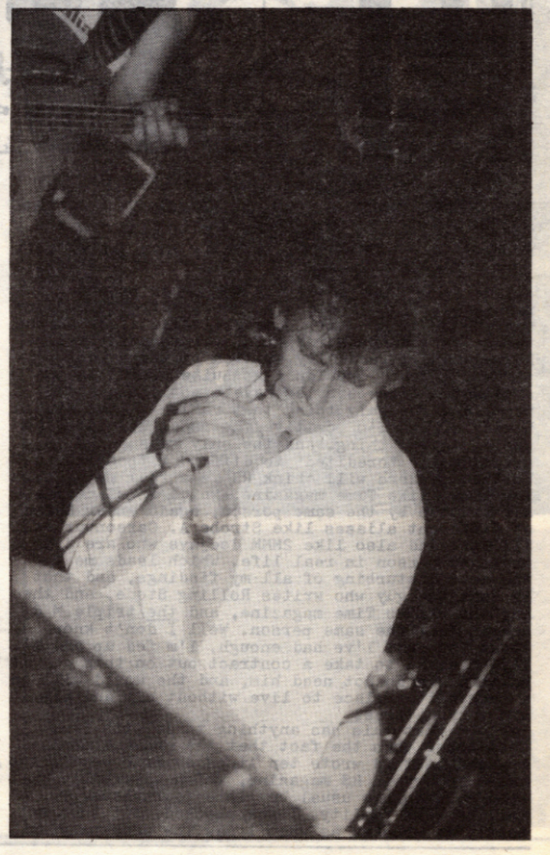
Partly because it's a single cover, we couldn't afford to do another fold out.

But you could have had an insert?

We've got an insert anyway with just the credits on it. I sort of thought this time maybe not. The last album was lyrically much more political and much more about social issues and stuff, so I thought ok there's a reason for those lyrics being there and also in the mix half the time you couldn't hear the bloody things. And the new one is a different album, it's more a introspective thing, it's much more subjective I guess, and it's much more open to interpretation. A song like Tick Tock is not really open to interpretation, but a song like Wild Desire is what you make of it - it could be a wank, it could be about surfing, it can be about drugs or anything you make of it.

The Celibate Rifles also have this thing of coming across as very anti fashion, and I read a review somewhere which said 'what would happen to the Celibate Rifles if they became fashionable?'

Well we've had it once to a point. See there's not a really identifiable image, if you want to relate on an image level to the Celibate Rifles, then you dress up in what you might wear around the house. So that's not a strong image, and it's not a saleable image. So in that sense, fashion, no we'll never be fashionable. What we've tried to do is avoid - I mean everybody is fashionable and everybody has an image, even it's a non-image, tha that's still an image - but what there is, is a fairly naive and fairly individualistic I guess, approach to dressing up for stage and stuff like that or dressing up to look like a fool, to just poke fun at that 'it's more important what you look like than what you play like' idea. That's what the Rifles try to avoid.



TRUE WEST

I bought Rolling Stone magazine for the first time in about three years the other day. Not the most intelligent move you can make I admit, and at $2.40 it's even dumber.

My excuse was the story the cover promised on fanzines. But I should have known better the story was the usual RS crap. However it did clear up one thing, as I'm now surer than ever than the entire RS magazine is actually written by the same person. I mean I wouldn't go quite as far as to say that all the stories have exactly the same text, and the only thing that varies is the stupid headings, but I'm positive the same guy wrote the whole fucking thing. And the only reason the articles are "credited" to different "people" is so that readers will think RS is a real magazine. You know, like Time magazine, which is of course all written by the same person, again under heaps of different aliases like Strobe A. Carsonburger III Jnr. And also like 2MMM deejays who are all the same person in real life. Which leads me to the most disturbing of all my findings, and that is that the guy who writes Rolling Stone, and the guy who writes Time magazine, and the triple M dj are in fact the same person. Well I don't know about you, but I've had enough, I'm fed up and I've decided to take a contract out on this bastard. We do not need him, and the world will be a much better place to live without him and all his incarnations.

Not that this has anything to do with True West other than the fact that the above soon-to-be-dead bastard wrote ten lines on True West's two year history in RS magazine, which remarkably enough, save his usual horrible journalese, tallies with reality. I was shocked, but then not nearly as shocked as when I saw the accompanying photo of True West doing their very best to look like Duran Duran. Because True West's fantastic Hollywood Holliday album is the antithesis of everything the DD's and RS's of this world are trying to hoist upon us.

True West are in the same musical company as the Dream Syndicate on the latter's "Tell Me When It's Over" and "Halloween", but when the DS branch off into the Velvet Underground Impersonation Stakes, True West crank their guitars up even louder and come off as a manic distant cousin to Tom Verlaine's acid guitar. It's a really loud swirling sound backed up by some relentless, and at times ferocious drumming, and a singer whose world-weary snarling borders on malevolence. But it's not all acid guitar heaven and vocoder type vocals. The album's title track has an almost folkish melody, but it's really dark, and listening to it puts you in the same place as the Gun Club's "House On Highland Avenue", and for that matter The Doors' "LA Woman". And just for summing up that same kind of desperateness it's probably the best track on the album.

True West hail from near Sacramento California where lead guitarist and songwriter Russ Tolman and singer Gavin Blair were in a band called the Suspects with the Dream Syndicate's Steve Wynn and original bassist Kendra Smith. The Suspects put out one single which went nowhere. After Wynn and Smith headed off to LA and fame and fortune, Tolman and Blair did little band-wise till July 82 when they formed True West. After just a few months of playing around their hometown, they'd been kicked out virtually every club for being too loud. Listening to Hollywood Holliday, this is not hard to believe, they do know how to make a glorious fucking racket.

And in November that year they released one, their first single, a truly manic guitar version of Syd Barrett's "Lucifer Sam". After more sporadic gigs, a slight change in the band's personnel, "Lucifer Sam" reappeared six months later in a slightly re-mixed form on the mini lp they recorded at BSU studios in San Francisco. The mini album, brought out on the band's own Bring Out Your Dead label, contained four other cuts that are on Hollywood Holliday. And gained TW a lot of favourable press on the east coast of the US and more than marginal interest from record companies on the west coast. In fact every thing seems to be going really well for True West at the moment, and the only thing that worries me is that photo and the quote from Tolman that TW's next (Tom Verlaine produced) lp "won't be half as psychedelic", and that quote about "they're only being so many one chord drone songs he could write". I don't know if that's the most accurate description of True West's music, but either way I think it would be great for him to keep on writing psychedelic one chord drone songs forever, or at least until I can get this contract business organized, because Hollywood Holliday really is a fantastic record.

other fanzines***

Trousers In Action
c/- Phantom Records 373 Pitt st Sydney 2000
Issue 6 has got Wrong Kind Of Stone Age, Corpse Grinders,Chaos, Vigil-Anti etc. $1

DNA
c/- The Record Factory 6 Rundle Arcade Adelaide 5000
The last one I got was number 35 though I think no. 36 exists. Anyway 35 had stuff on Beulah Road bands, Hoodoo Gurus plus the usual exhaustive reviews etc. 70¢

Regression
19 McKinley Ave Malvern 3144
Up to number 9 which has rundowns on punk scenes around the country plus a few overseas bands 90¢

Bucketfull Of Brains
58a Abbotsford Ave London N15 3BS UK.
Great English mag on mostly psychedelic things (new and old) and past issues have had stuff on the Dream Syndicate, Chesterfield Kings, Rain Parade, the Prisoners and about four million others. Great value. It cost me $2.50 in the shop so I suppose if you wanted one airmail you'd better send two pounds which is still great value.

Distant Violins
1 Scott st Hawthorn 3122
Issue number ten has got the Violent Femmes, Wet Taxis interview, Lighthouse Keepers, comics and reviews. 85¢

All the prices quoted here are the shop prices so if you send for them don't forget an extra 50¢ or so for stamps.

JFK and the Cuban Crisis

the ballad of JACKIE

John ? Kennedy was interviewed at his house by Kate Baychek.

Why did JFK disband? What happened?

In July '83 I informed the band I didn't want to perform anymore. Because we'd reached a stage where we'd finished our amateur apprenticeship and the next step was being 'semi-professional' and the only future I could see was a three or four year slog around the rock circuit to become an established rock band,which wasn't what I was interested in. So the band decided to disband, then we came up with the project of doing a final farewell album to document the material that we'd been playing for the last three years. And that's what we've been doing for the past nine months.

It's appropriately called End Of The Affair?

It's the title of a Graham Green book.

How do feel about the album as a product?

I think it will be valued by people who like JFK. I've got faith in all of the songs, but it wouldnt stand up to the latest Duran Duran or Spandau Ballet as it was recorded in an eight track studio on a budget of $100 per song. So taking that into account it's a very good album.

In the present line up you've had a few guest "stars". How has that worked out?

It's turning out to be quite successful. We've had Rob from the Triffids playing violin on three tracks in our current set. Rob also features on Jackie O, the single that's taken from the album. We have a three part brass section for about three songs in the set. Brass features pretty heavily on the album adding a different flavor to the usual two guitar, bass and drums line up.

What are the problems involved in managing your own band?

The problems are that as well as having to get on with each other on a personal basis, you've got the problem when running your own business that your never able to relax with each other without the subject of business coming up. And so it just creates a lot of tension, you know. When your an amateur trying to run a band on a professional basis you don't have the contacts or the facilities to do it properly, which creates problems in itself. But the worst thing is this tension within the band because you can never relate to each other personally anymore or socially. You're always talking to each other on a business level, which is part of the problem with J.F.K. - another aspect of the break-up.

Has the project of recording the End Of The Affair brought the band closer together?

The recording was a very tense situation. James and I agreed that we were making no headway in co-producing the songs that we had recorded. Both of us were compromising ourselves and not getting a lot of satisfaction in our own songs. So we decided to produce our own songs. In that situation we didn't really co-operate with each other in the studio - I just sang on James's songs, and he'd play guitar on mine. When it actually came to the point where we had to organise shows to promote the album, there was a tremendous amount of tension. We could hardly talk to each other.
But once we had actually settled on what we were going to do, and started the rehearsal period, everything went incredibly well - which was a surprise to all of us. We actually wrote a new song in rehearsal.
This is one of about 3 new songs, James has written one with Rob from the Triffids,and there's one that I have written, and hope to release after J.F.K. has finished. That's a project which I'm going into by myself. Things have gone really well.

How are your final shows going?
How have you found the audience response?

Well,for a blow by blow account, First, the Strawberry Hill on Tuesday night, had a big audience, which is unfortunately not suited to the venue. I don't think a lot of the audience had a good time, and it was pretty uncomfortable for the band. But it was a good audience response.
Wednesday with the Saints at the Hotel Manly, doing the support. There was a reasonably big crowd from the early part of the night,which was encouraging.
On Friday at Players there were lots of problems. A very badly managed room, hardly any advertising, which resulted in a not particularly large crowd. There were problems with the P.A., it wasn't a very good night.

How have you found the transition from Brisbane to Sydney?

We were quite successful in Brisbane terms. We had achieved all that you could achieve in Brisbane. But it's a very strange situation in Brisbane, because you can actually build up a following, but even those people that accept and support you are somehow aggressive towards you.
When we moved to Sydney and established a new line-up, new repertoire, broke into the small venue circuits and released our E.P. we got tremendous response. Like people actually coming up and saying encouraging things! Which was just a big shock - we'd never had that sort of response before. So we've been really happy to the response we've got in Sydney.

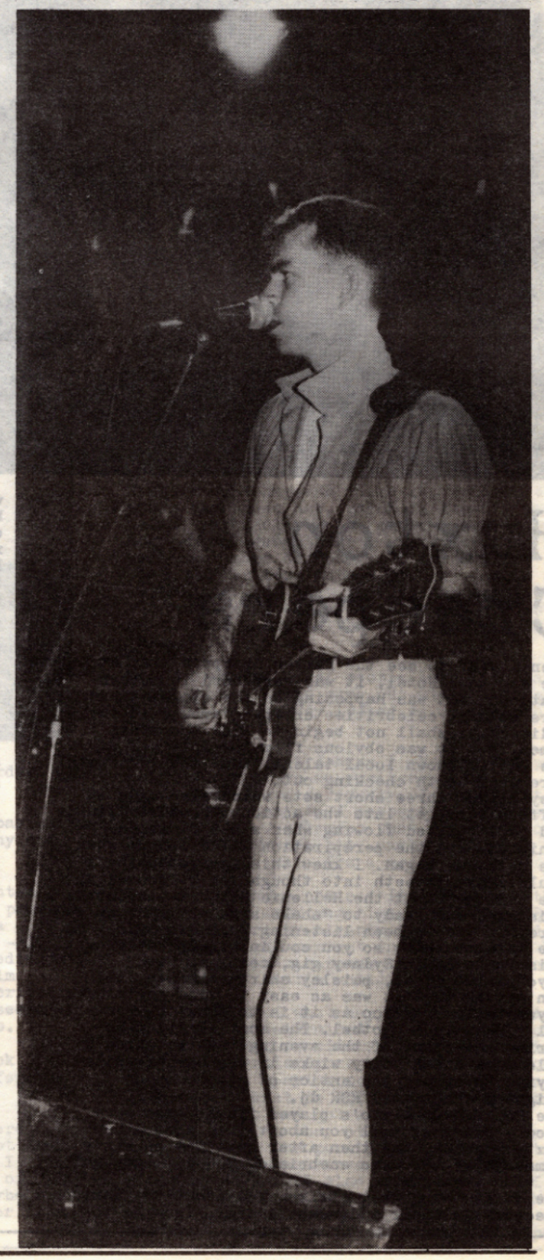
What about your achievements now that your album is almost on the road?

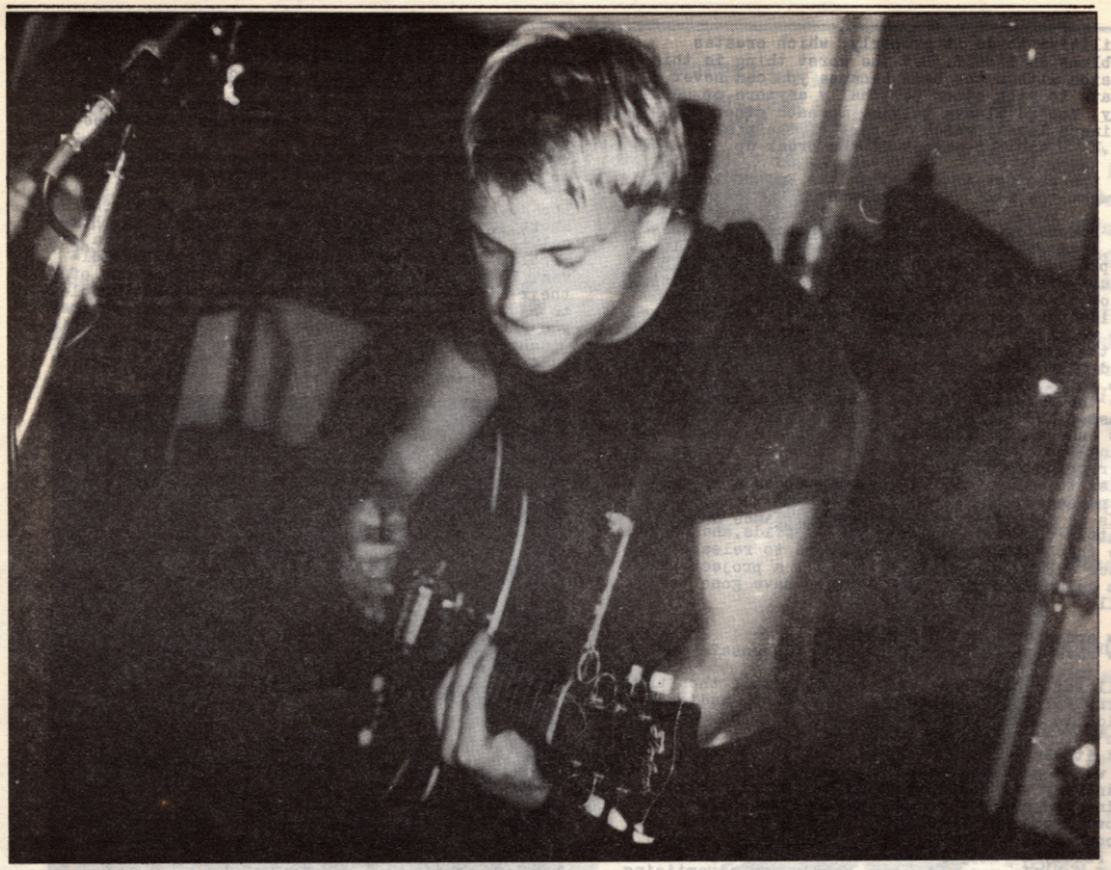
I think as far as minor league bands go, J.F.K. has achieved all that could be hoped, for a band that had no agency backing, no record label and no management - we've got a huge response, and we've done really well. We haven't capitalised on it because of our lack of organisation and lack of management, but I've been very happy with the actual material we've released.

Now that the Affair is ending, what's next for the band members?

I don't know. I hope that those answers will come from the individual band members in an article that we're organising soon.
Me - I've got a project planned which involves forming a casual band, which will probably play 50% originals, and 50% covers, playing in reasonably low key situations. I've been wanting to do this for some time.
I'll carry on my pet projects of independent casette releases and independent single releases. I find a lot of satisfaction in doing the planning and graphics in marketing for projects like that. And I'll also be doing some guest singing spots for bands like the "Rockmelons" and "Cheetin' Hearts".
You've already played with the Rockmelons, how do you feel about the gig at the muso's club?

The Rockmelons have been very successful in the short period. Where they've been organising themselves this time around, I think they had a major problem in that they probably Out-Hyped themselves. They drew such a big audience to see one of their limited shows, that the audience was unable to have the good time that the Rockmelons promote, you know, that good time - fun - get down - boogie - dance band. And it was so crowded at the Musicians Club that nobody could do anything except watch - which sortof defeats their purpose.



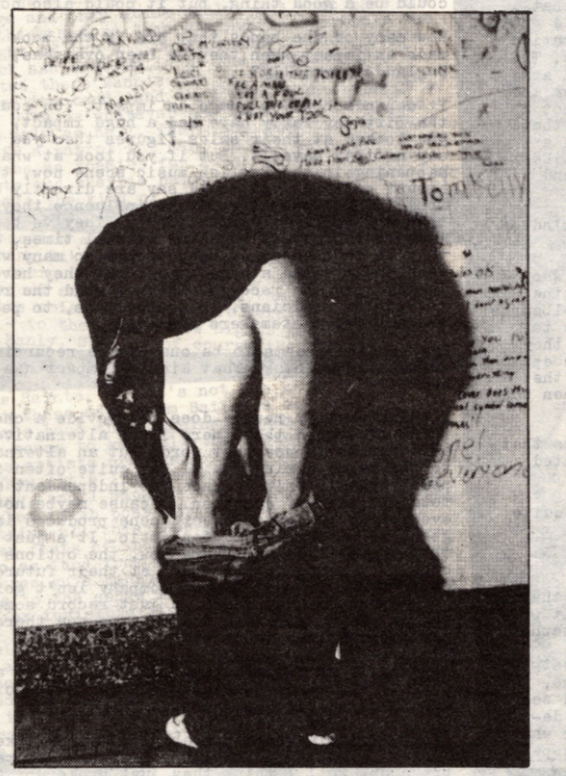


Huxton Creepers

When I went to see the Huxton Creepers play at the Hopetoun Hotel, it was very hard to concentrate on what was happening on the stage, there were so many celebrities creeping around in the audience. I shall not begin to list the stars names, but it was obvious from the interest of the better known local talent, that the 'Creepers were well worth checking out.
They played three short sets which also made it difficult to get into the action. The adrenalin had just started flowing when a set finished finished, and the perspiration all dried up when the next one began. I knew this was something I could sink my teeth into though, so I fronted up the next night at the Hellenic Hall, my tastebuds moistened and ready to "shake some action", as it were. If you've been listening to Radio Sydney in the last month or so you couldn't help but know this was a Radio Sydney gig, complete with psychedelic disco, paisley shirts etc etc. All I can say is that it was as easy to find anything psychedelic or disco as it is to find the proverbial virgin in a brothel. The most exciting act during that part of the evening, was watching a solo punk catch forty winks in the corner whilst trying to ignore the antics of a more than slightly enebriated RSR dj.
The Howling Commando's played first - who were good - but I'll tell you about them some other sixty seconds. And then after some not so witty comments by the same enebriated RSR dj, they got on with the show.
The first thing that strikes you about the Huxton Creepers is their incessant energy, from go to whoa, it's just go go go. Either these guys haven't suffered from constant gigging and touring, or they just love what they're doing, and can really pass that feeling onto the audience.
Everyone is dancing and really "getting some fun", it's like the early Sunnyboys, before they attracted middle of the road meatheads to their gigs, who just love to fight and dance at the same time, and probably before they (the Sunnyboys) let their marketing man onstage to hustle up some t shirt sales. Rob Craw's vocals have been likened to Jeremy Oxley's, but I think the not so frequent times when he sounds a bit like him reveal that the two bands have similar influences, and not that they are trying to be Sunnyboys clones, as the press seem to be saying between the lines.
The 'Creepers are very much their own band. If any home grown band has influenced them, I think the Hoodoo Gurus are a better choice. It's obvious that these guys are young and still experimenting with a lot of ideas, before settling down to produce something uniquely theirs (for want of a better expression). The talent is there, it's just a matter of time and experience. Not that by any means their only current credibility is as being a fun dance band, they're great entertainers, with an element of adlib and humour to enhance their performance.
Their set, which was about fifty per cent covers, included a Doors medley - with the son in The End walking on down the hall and saying, "Father, can I borrow the car keys?". They even wave their guitars up and down doing Status Quo impersonations - Heebee Geebees eat your heart out! The adlib comes in when the manager of the band keeps getting the lead guitarist to tune up mid-set, but all is handled with casual expertise.
An interesting comment overheard was how much more like a Sydney band than a Melbourne band they are. It will be interesting to see where they become more popular, and if Sydney will ever become their home.

Caroline Birkett.

THE NEXT THANG



Clinton Walker was interviewed by Peter Jordan about his new book, The Next Thing.

Your new book departs from your last one, basically because it's a collection of interviews. Why did you choose that format?

At the time I suppose I was a bit disenchanted with the rock jounalist - critic so called process in Australia. I suppose I was inspired to a certain degree - I will cite the influence - I picked up an old collection of interviews edited by Andrew Sarris called Interviews With Film Directors which I guess for American film criticism was a pioneer volumne, and I thought that seems like a reasonable idea I might give it a go.

So it says quite a bit about Australian rock journalism that you thought this was a preferable medium?

Yeah I think at the time I was thinking there wasn't a lot of good, serious, in depth, not even vaguely intelligent things being said, and I thought if we are going to look at an area of original Australian rock and roll music maybe the way to do it is to let the artists speak for themselves.

But do you think that's the best way of going about it, because sometimes the artists although they can be creative can't always articulate what they're doing?

That was one of the problems. I don't think every rock and roll musician is necessarily the most talkative or articulate kind of person which is not to say they're not good artists. I think that then calls upon the resources of the interviewer to pull things out of people. Interviews are also interesting because it's also a way in which someone can put their foot firmly in their mouth. So I think they are quite a telling way of looking at something if you've got someone who knows how to use the interview technique.

Did you find that most of the bands were capable in that situation. I noticed that some of them were quite young and probably inexperienced at handling interviews?

Yeah I think you get some people who are quite articulate even to the point of being verbose and then you get some that aren't quite so talkative but what they do say says a fair bit. For instance a group like the Scientists aren't terribly talkative, but in a way if you read the interview with them it does sort of sum up what they're like, and I accept that completely really.

Do you think that on the whole Australian rock journalism has progressed? There seems to have been more books yours in particular, Stuart Coupe, Glenn A Baker...

Yeah there's more books. I'm not sure if the quality of it all has really improved. I suppose Australian rock journalism kind of got a start not until really the late sixties, and where it's gone from there I'm not sure, I don't really think it's gone that far, there's a lot more quantity but as to the quality?

How do you compare it to the English, which is very stylistic and very unique in that way, weekly magazines like New Musical Express for instance?

I think what happens there is, because the great power the press has, which it doesn't have in Australia, particularly the music press, there's a lot more encouragement for a writer to take himself a whole lot more seriously. I think a lot of writers there suffer from an ego problem, and a self-importance. But they do take themselves seriously and work very hard at developing an identity as a writer and a critic, but perhaps that is less so in Australia.

What do you think of people like Tony Parsons and Julie Burchill who came out with their polemic on punk called The Boy Looked At Johnny, things like that.

The Boy Looked At Johnny I thought was possibly nothing more than an encitement to riot. I could never take it to seriously, I thought it was entertaining and contained perception of some sort. But I find them... polemics that are that powerful I do shy away from a bit, maybe I'm a bit of a moderate. Gee whiz I'm a moderate.

One thing I have noticed in comparison though is that particularly magazines like the NME linked themselves pretty clearly with some kind of underlying political current in the country, but I don't think that happens to such a degree here. Do you think that's valid?

Well so much of what happens in the music press in Australia is determined by one little consideration, and it's a big consideration, and that is that they rely on advertising revenue from the record companies so they've more or less got to stay in line. So it must be difficult if an editor of a rock magazine has got a political angle of his or her own, how do they state that and keep everybody happy. That's the position that the editors of these sort of magazines are in. I'm not in that position so I feel glad about that. If I have personal politics, they are probably inherent in what I write. But I think anything like a rock band has implied politics anyway, so hopefully that

comes through when you interview them, and in the critique you apply to them.

Your a freelance writer. Does that mean you don't make a living out of what you do?

It's not easy to make a living. I guess it depends on how well you rationalise and structure the way you approach it, and find the right outlets for the right sort of material, and kind of economize the way you do it. I can sort of just make a living now but for five or six years I suppose you could say that I haven't.

In the introduction to your book you say Australia still suffers from a historical inferiority complex. What do you mean by this and how do you think it manifests itself in the music?

Well I can illustrate the way it manifests itself in the music immediately and that's to say that Australian audiences really will respond to a group after it's been overseas, and got the affirmation of the English press and the American charts. The bands will come back and be welcomed by open arms, whereas before they might not have given them the time of day. As to why this happens... I'm not a historian or a sociologist or anything like that so it's kind of hard for me to explain. It's a question in my mind and it's something I'd like to resolve. It's something that I think about and will no doubt look further into.

What kind of bands have suffered from that kind of view?

It probably runs the range from Men At Work who are playing in a pub down at Richmond, down the road from me in 1979 when I was living in Melbourne to the Birthday Party, who never got anybody to come and see them till they went away, when they came back it was kind of like a slavering reception really. And I think the same will happen to the Moodists, the Scientists and the Triffids when they go away possibly.

One interesting thing on that 'pilgrimage" is that in many cases they come back quite disappointed with what they've found overseas?

Yeah I made a pilgrimage to and I came back quite disappointed.

Why is that? What did you expect?

I don't know what I expected, all I knew is that I had to find out what was over the hill, as it were. Over the hill is an interesting, curious metaphor actually. Going to England, I think if your interested in music, or whatever your interest is, you'd like to know what's going on over there, you have to see for yourself so you go there and see for yourself. And immediately everything is de-mythologised and you can see straight it for what it is. And to me, London just struck me as a petty, small town as far as the music industry goes, I it's no different to Sydney or Melbourne, and probably inferior I felt in terms of the way business is run and all that sort of thing.

It's been referred to recently as the haircut scene which dictates the fashion which dictates the music. Do you think that's valid?

Yeah I think the way things are in England is that fashion has always crossed over to such a huge extent with music, it's always been like that. In a way I like that to a certain extent - the way in which people in England were not so much "fashion concious", but concious about the way they appeared and the fact that they could identify with a certain tribe. But that's only good I suppose in as much as I really dislike the Australian stereo-type of thongs and stubbies. I think it (appearance conciousness) is creeping in in Australia. It could be a good thing, but it could also not be.

How many of the bands that are in the book have made an impact when they've been overseas, to England especially?

It depends how you guage an impact. You could say the Birthday Party have had a huge impact, but if you looked at their sales figures then you would say no they haven't. But if you look at what's happening in the English music scene now, the amount of bands you could say are directly derived from the Birthday Party, the influence they've had they are really a seminal force. They've been on the cover of every magazine several times, and they've influenced so many people so many ways. So yeah they've had a huge impact but they haven't really sold the records. They've sold the records to younger musicians, to journalists, to people who are the tastemakers basically.

Independence seems to be one of the recurring themes in the book. What kind of impact has that had?

I think what it really does is provide a choice. I think it's good that there is an alternative, loath as I may be to use that word, but an alternative to the major domination. I say quite often in print that I can't embrace the independent scene totally, without question. Because maybe not everything the independent scene produces is going to be completely fantastic. It's just good that the options are there now, the options are open to a young band to look at their future and say, "Look, a major record company isn't going to care about us, why don't we just record something ourselves and put it out", because now there is the machinations to do that.

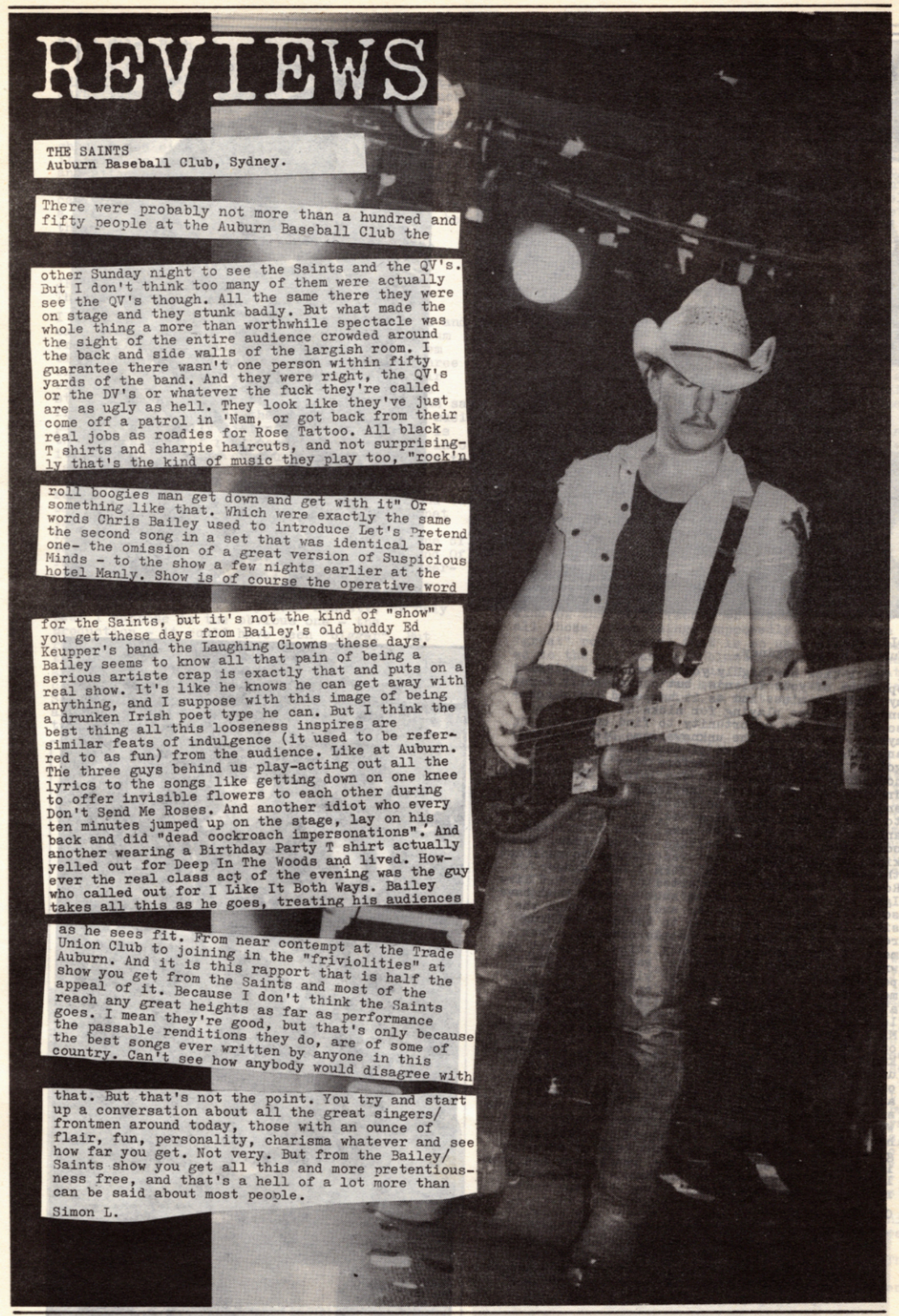
Especially with bands that just don't have any obvious appeal commercially. Who are some of those bands you've discussed in the book?

A good example would probably be a band like the Sunday Painters from Wollongong, who just recently broke up, well I think they just broke up. Anyway, they went for a couple of years completely self-sufficient in Wollongong. Making records of their own, putting their records out and distributing them themselves too. I think it was only in the very late stages of their career that they might have had some sort of link up with Hot to get slightly wider distribution. But they were able to live and work and produce completely from Wollong-ong, so that's gotta be a good thing.

Coming from Wollongong I know how hard that could be. Also M Squared seemed to play quite an import-ant role, as you see it in the development of some sort of stylistic independent music. Can you explain that relationship?

I think what M Squared did was that they probably came along in Sydney when Sydney was dominated I guess by the hangover of Radio Birdman. M Squared introduced the synthesizer to Sydney, I suppose that's as plainly as you could put it, in a way that's what they did. At the same time M Squared always had a very strong identity, which is great for someone to actually have an identity like that. I think they just went about their business in a way that they just saw fit for themselves, and they just did what they wanted to do, and I would describe them as being reasonably successful at that even if they didn't sell a lot of records.

REVIEWS



THE SAINTS
Auburn Baseball Club, Sydney.

There were probably not more than a hundred and fifty people at the Auburn Baseball Club the other Sunday night to see the Saints and the QV's. But I don't think too many of them were actually see the QV's though. All the same there they were on stage and they stunk badly. But what made the whole thing a more than worthwhile spectacle was the sight of the entire audience crowded around the back and side walls of the largish room. I guarantee there wasn't one person within fifty yards of the band. And they were right, the QV's or the DV's or whatever the fuck they're called are as ugly as hell. They look like they've just come off a patrol in 'Nam, or got back from their real jobs as roadies for Rose Tattoo. All black T shirts and sharpie haircuts, and not surprising-ly that's the kind of music they play too, "rock'n roll boogies man get down and get with it" Or something like that. Which were exactly the same words Chris Bailey used to introduce Let's Pretend the second song in a set that was identical bar one- the omission of a great version of Suspicious Minds - to the show a few nights earlier at the hotel Manly. Show is of course the operative word for the Saints, but it's not the kind of "show" you get these days from Bailey's old buddy Ed Keupper's band the Laughing Clowns these days. Bailey seems to know all that pain of being a serious artiste crap is exactly that and puts on a real show. It's like he knows he can get away with anything, and I suppose with this image of being a drunken Irish poet type he can. But I think the best thing all this looseness inspires are similar feats of indulgence (it used to be refer-red to as fun) from the audience. Like at Auburn. The three guys behind us play-acting out all the lyrics to the songs like getting down on one knee to offer invisible flowers to each other during Don't Send Me Roses. And another idiot who every ten minutes jumped up on the stage, lay on his back and did "dead cockroach impersonations". And another wearing a Birthday Party T shirt actually yelled out for Deep In The Woods and lived. How-ever the real class act of the evening was the guy who called out for I Like It Both Ways. Bailey takes all this as he goes, treating his audiences as he sees fit. From near contempt at the Trade Union Club to joining in the "friviolities" at Auburn. And it is this rapport that is half the show you get from the Saints and most of the appeal of it. Because I don't think the Saints reach any great heights as far as performance goes. I mean they're good, but that's only because the passable renditions they do, are of some of the best songs ever written by anyone in this country. Can't see how anybody would disagree with that. But that's not the point. You try and start up a conversation about all the great singers/ frontmen around today, those with an ounce of flair, fun, personality, charisma whatever and see how far you get. Not very. But from the Bailey/ Saints show you get all this and more pretentious-ness free, and that's a hell of a lot more than can be said about most people.

Simon L.

DIED PRETTY
Vulcan Hotel, Sydney.

I don't know how highly you regard the musical opinions of your friends, but occasionally I put my faith in mine. And as it happened the recommended band was playing for nicks at the Vulcan, so I siezed the opportunity to find out for myself. So out of the unknown came Died Pretty, and judging by the size of the audience, it's going to be a long time before they'll be a household word. For me it was love at first sight, drawing on late Sixties Americana, the hard rock end of psychedelia, Died Pretty have the ability to come up with something new, and not become another hack revisionist band. Lots of guitars, occasional keyboard dabblings - true bliss. These kinds of influences have even started to manifest themselves in a physical form - lead singer Ronald S Peno,has even started to look a bit like Iggy Pop. But it's a shame such a great band have so little rapport with the audience, though the situation was no doubt due to the overwhelming response of at least six people clapping after most of their songs. The only thing I thought was wrong with their performance, was the absence of performance. I'm sure someone will disagree with me here, but when it comes to entertaining and attracting a following, a little charisma goes a long way. I mean I still baffled as to what Mr R S Peno had in his duffle coat pocket throughout the entire performance, I guess I will never know. Regardless of this, I had a great time, and understand how difficult it must be to remain onstage and play to a generally unresponsive audience, let alone add the trimmings. Their single Out Of The Unknown is excellent! The b side World Without is even better! You probably won't hear it on Triple M or that rapidly declining government run station, so just take my word for it, and go out and buy it now. And if you see them live, it's ok to dance or applaud, or if you're really outrageous - both.

Caroline Birkett.

HUSKER DU
Eight Miles High 45

I don't want to go totally over the top but this really is something. The... what can I call it... aural tumult (that's a good one) here is of such pained intensity, this melding of man and metal is so... well, the guy singing sounds like he's going to die. And I don't mean in the Nick Cave-plays-ghoul sense either. This record transends hardcore it bears no resemblance whatsoever to the original and sits way out there somewhere, quite literally on the "(l)edge". To press my point even further, I can only say that if we ever get around to having a single/album/record of the week/month thing here this one would have a half-inch thick border around it. It stands out from the rest of the records here that much.

JFK & THE CUBAN CRISIS
The End Of The Affair lp

I suppose it would be really easy to sit back and say, "yeah yeah this record is a farewell album from JFK and how much everybody will miss them blah blah". But having only seen them play three or four times I can't really claim to be their biggest fan, and so can't really say all that stuff with any real conviction. But what I can say from reading about all their problems in the music papers and actually listening to this album, is that the amount of real conviction that went into it's making is quite obvious. And that this faith is part of the reason why you should buy it. The other part, which is much less of an emotional response to all of the goings on in and around the band as serialised on radio and in OTS, is that the music, the songs, are great.
That "great songs" phrase must be close to one of the most over-used, but in relation to The End Of The Affair it really does apply. This is commercial (read catchy) pop music as it should be, without the trimmings/the hype/the Countdowns, just great songs and a lyrical honesty. My only beef I suppose is the obvious one - the production - it could have been "bigger". But really big production jobs are part of the trimmings, so that complaint is kind of irrelevant and almost irreverent compared to the heart and conviction in this record.
So now I can sit back and say you should buy this album, because at least I think I've explained the two most important reasons why.

THE THREE O'CLOCK

MEAT PUPPETS
Meat Puppets II

Like with Husker Du, there's definitely something going on here too. I bought Meat Puppets II after reading someone describe the band's live show as "an amazing mixture of metalcore and psych guitar; a mutant blues and perverted country assault". What you get on record is a lot less than that description in terms of sheer volumn and sheer hell, but a lot more disturbing. The Meat Puppets appear to be living in a world running tangental to that of the rest of us. And as if their melding of near bluegrass, speeded-up country and western interspersed with great slabs of deranged and almost HM guitar noises isn't proof enough of this then offerings such as; "Climb,climb, I always climb/Out of bed in the morning/On a mountain made of sand/And I know this doesn't rythme/But the clutter on the table/Has been getting out of hand" and "Time,time it's so sublime/Well they say it's non existant/But it's playing on my mind/And phone calls don't cost a dime/In the caverns of your feelings/Where the sun will never shine", should be. Using the words from a film whose connection to Heart Of Darkness I barely noticed, "They are out there operating without any decent restraint, totally beyond the pale of any acceptable human conduct". This record is either fifteen years ahead or fifteen years behind it's time. I don't know which, all I know is that something is definitely going on here and I really like it a lot..

SEKRET SEKRET
Girl With A White Stick

I can't believe these malcontents who will screech at almost every opportunity "rock is dead" or some similar rubbish. I mean if rock IS dead, what IS alive? Art or something?. Like I said, it's just a load of old bollocks. And more conclusive proof of this cannot be found anywhere than on Sekret Sekret's 'White Stick' single because it has the kind of intensity (sense of urgency, hope etc and all those other things supposedly inherent in all "great" rock music) that is so understated compared to the all bash and bluster approach of most of those who want to tell us "rock is alive" that it makes the record even more potent, and elevates it to absolute gem status. A masterpiece.

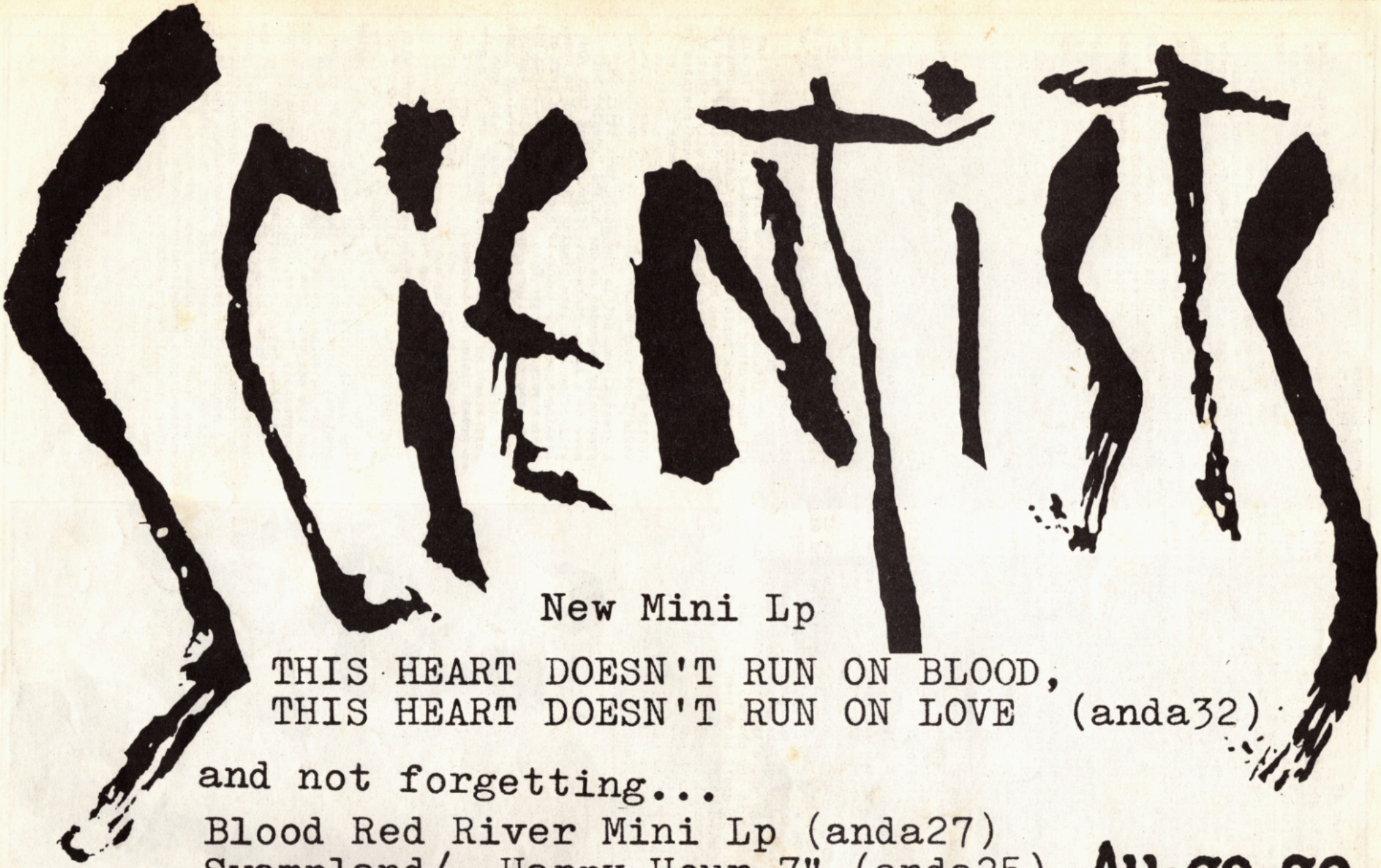
JULIAN COPE
World Shut Your Mouth lp

A great album. Not in the sense that it'll be eventually regarded as one of the "greats" but more of a three-stars-out-of-four album that you will often feel like playing in the years to come. Lasting appeal, I think it's called. It's sort of like a very eclectic Echo & the Bunnymen album but with even more guitars, and a really clean bouncy production. Lyrically it's almost soulful at times but still mostly very oblique. There's not one duff track as far as I can remember, and it's got a great title. Good value.

THE THREE O'CLOCK
Sixteen Tambourines lp

These guys like the above have played around with the psychedelia tag, but also like Cope when you actually listen to them nowadays it's pretty irrelevant. Because this is real pop - try to imagine the Durutti Column's "Sketch for Summer/Winter/whatever" instrumental thing meets the Particles in the botanical gardens under an old oak tree - and you get some idea of the "feel" of this record Fortunately the Three O'Clock don't actually sound like that, but this record has a really nice, postive, upbeat thing to it. Musically you get the impression of a band honing down it's almost punkish roots, throwing in lots of acoustic guitars and other little tricks, studio things that is, that make it apparent that they've listened to the first Pink Floyd album more than once. But any evidence of a predeliction towards that or any other musical genre ends here. And the records' greatest "hallmarks" are the singer, Micheal Quercio who sounds like Feargal Sharkey with his balls in a vice, and the fact that it is composed almost entirely of great songs. Stack this up against the currently popular Smiths and the Three O'Clock come out literally miles ahead in the songwriting dept. So all in all I think Sixteen Tambourines is more than pretty good.

Simon L.



New Mini Lp

THIS HEART DOESN'T RUN ON BLOOD,
THIS HEART DOESN'T RUN ON LOVE (anda32)

and not forgetting...

Blood Red River Mini Lp (anda27)
Swampland/..Happy Hour 7" (anda25)
We Had Love/Clear Spot 7" (anda30)

Au-go-go.